

TEXT OF SEN. EDWARD M. KENNEDY'S AUG. 21 ADDRESS (248)

Following is the complete text of Aug. 21 remarks by Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D Mass.) before the Worcester Area Chamber of Commerce in Worcester, Mass.: (For story, see p. 2229.)

I come today to Worcester, to the heart of my home, a state that has supported the efforts and shared the sorrows of my life. I thank you for your reception. I thank this state and its people for everything you have done—and everything you have meant—for all the Kennedy family.

Our thoughts today are with General Eisenhower, who has served his country gallantly—as the head of our armies and of our country. We pray that he will prevail in this, his ultimate struggle.

For the last 10 weeks I have not been active in public life. I have concerned myself with my family. I have spent much of my time with the sea; clearing my mind and spirit; putting the past behind, opening a way to what lies ahead.

Some of you have suggested that for safety's sake, and for my family's sake, I retire from public life. To those who have so written me—my deep thanks for your kindness, and for your concern. But there is no safety in hiding. Not for me; not for any of us here today; and not for our children, who will inherit the world we make for them. For all of us, the only path is to work, in whatever way we can, to end the silence, and the hatred, and the divisions that threaten us all.

So today I resume my public responsibilities to the people of Massachusetts. Like my brothers before me, I pick up a fallen standard. Sustained by the memory of our priceless years together, I shall try to carry forward that special commitment—to justice, to excellence, and to courage—that distinguished their lives.

This is a time of intense political activity. But I have not come here to speak for partisan interests. I have come here to speak of things that concern every citizen of these United States:

I am concerned, first of all, with the divisions among us—of views, of where we live, of the color of our skins; and I am concerned about the quality of our lives.

I am concerned particularly that so many of the young and the poor have felt impelled to defy the very basis of our system, through demonstrations and disruption, because they see no other way to share in the decisions that govern their lives—in the ghetto, or in the university, or in the foreign policy of the nation.

For a while this year, there was new hope that the voice of the individual could be heard through the time-tested process of American political democracy. Hundreds of thousands of Americans worked in primaries and party caucuses throughout the country, in a new politics of citizen participation. Surely this was the most hopeful development of a difficult year. It would be tragic now, if all the dedicated efforts of those who worked for change in both political parties should count for nothing in the final choice of policies presented to the electorate in November.

I am concerned, deeply concerned, about crime, about disrespect for law, about the violence and dark disorder that so afflict our lives. Yet I am also troubled by the fact that we seem to be surrendering to the wrong answers to these problems. We have less understanding than fear; less cooperation than separatism. Guns and gas are being stockpiled against crime and riots, but the basic causes of crime and riots—bad schools and housing, no jobs and an inadequate passion for justice—these are being neglected.

Some say that only force will bring order. But arms alone will never bring quiet or security to our streets. All our people—not just those of us who are comfortable, but also and especially those who live in want and fear and pain—all our people must know that the forces of law and order are also the forces of justice; that there is a place for them in this society; that this is also their country.

Tide of Fear

While every government must protect the lives and property of its citizens, we will not promote law and order by attacking our courts. We will not meet the problem of crime by turning our backs on the Constitution. And we cannot let the new leadership of this country be swept into office on a tide of fear. This is a nation of confidence and compassion and high purpose. That is the only way we can live.

All these are vital concerns. There is another. It is the war in Vietnam. This war is the tragedy of our generation. Like most of you, in the early years of our involvement I hoped that we could help the South Vietnamese to help themselves; that a modest program of American advisors, equipment and aid would enable the government of South Vietnam to build a nation and a government capable of attracting the support of its own people, and of achieving a political victory over the Viet Cong. But those hopes are gone. They have foundered in a morass of miscalculation and self-deception. They have been stymied by the stubbornness of the foe; but above all they have been buried by the overwhelming incompetence and corruption of our South Vietnamese ally—a government that has consistently proved incapable or unwilling to meet the needs of its own people, a government that has demanded ever more money, ever more American lives to be poured into the swamp of their failure.

We, to our sorrow, have met almost every demand. Nearly 200,000 Americans have been killed or wounded. Twenty-five thousand have died. Over 100 billion tax dollars have been spent. Here were the resources to have fulfilled the promise of American life in our generation; here were the young men to have given leadership to a nation. Here were the energies and the labors of a government of dedicated men. Here was progress to dream of, and to work for, and to hand down to our children. Here was an America ready to give leadership to an entire world. Old allies and new friends, former enemies and present adversaries—all might have looked at our country with warmth and respect and the sure knowledge that this must be their model of the future. It was all here, but now it is gone.

It is gone, that is, unless we now resolve to make an end to this war, which is long past any useful purpose it once might have been thought to serve. And the end must be not five or ten years from now; not after the expenditure of another \$100 billion and the lives of another 25,000 of our finest sons; but as quickly as it is physically possible to reach the essential agreements, and to extricate our men and our future from this bottomless pit of our dreams.

Specific Steps

Specifically, our Government should undertake as soon as possible:

First, to end unconditionally all bombing of North Vietnam; Second, to then negotiate with Hanoi the mutual withdrawal from South Vietnam of all foreign forces, both allied and North Vietnamese;

Third, to accompany this withdrawal with whatever help we can give the South Vietnamese in the building of a viable political, economic and legal structure that will not promptly collapse upon our departure; and

Fourth, to demonstrate to both Hanoi and Saigon the sincerity of our intentions by significantly decreasing this year the level of our military activity and military personnel in the South.

These steps would enable us to end our participation in this war with honor, having fulfilled our commitment to prevent a North Vietnamese military takeover of the South and having left the future of South Vietnam to the self-determination of the South Vietnamese people. Under this plan, neither Hanoi nor Washington will try in Paris to either require, or rule out, a

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coalition government: to either supervise or suppress election procedures, or to name, portfolio by portfolio, the occupants of individual ministerial posts.

I would not urge a cessation in the bombing of North Vietnam if that would cost American lives. But two facts are unmistakably clear:

1. While the bombing has made more difficult the movement of North Vietnamese men and materiel to the South, it has never reduced it. The Secretary of Defense confirmed this fact just last week.
2. An end to the killing in Vietnam can never be negotiated as long as the bombing of North Vietnam continues.

Negotiations

Halting the bombing would thus save many more American lives than it would ever endanger. It would make less likely Hanoi's initiation of new death dealing assaults. It would test their willingness to begin serious negotiations.

Those negotiations, as I have indicated, should be concerned primarily with the withdrawal of all foreign troops from South Vietnam. The intrusion of large numbers of North Vietnamese combat units into South Vietnam was a principal justification in 1965 for dispatching large numbers of American combat units. The withdrawal of all such troops, by both sides, should be the goal of the negotiations in Paris once the bombing has stopped. If we continue instead to insist that our withdrawal be conditioned upon the cessation of all violence in the South, or based upon the readiness of South Vietnamese troops to take over, or tied to elaborate plans for international peace forces, I am very much afraid that we will remain there indefinitely. My objective is much simpler: as Hanoi withdraws her troops, we withdraw ours.

Saigon Regime

I am not unmindful of the difficulties our withdrawal would create for the rulers of a Saigon regime. But Saigon has yet to demonstrate either popular support or a desire to commit that nation fully to that struggle. We can in the course of our disengagement take steps to assure the safety of those whom encouraged to stand, up against a Communist military takeover. We can help construct a cohesive society as a substitute for our military presence. But the most important spur that we can provide to the Saigon government—to persuade it to broaden its base, increase its appeal, and negotiate an accommodation with the National Liberation Front—is to make clear our intention to withdraw from the South as Hanoi withdraws, and our complete unwillingness thereafter to bear the burden of their responsibilities and to pick up the pieces of their failures.

The government in Saigon must not be given a veto over our course in Paris, our cessation of the bombing, or our mutual withdrawal of troops. They must be given clear notice that their chief prop will be taken away as soon as we can conclude such negotiations with Hanoi. In short, as we negotiate so must they negotiate with their adversaries—without having achieved a military victory. They, too, will have to make concessions. They, too, will have to work for peace.

Finally, by lowering immediately and significantly the level of our military activity and personnel in the South, we would make clear both the seriousness and good faith of our intentions—not only to Hanoi, thus hopefully spurring the willingness to work out a mutual withdrawal with us, but also to Saigon, thus hopefully spurring their desire to talk peace with the National Liberation Front.

It may be asked: does this fulfill our commitment? Is this indeed an honorable way out? To both questions, I believe the answer is yes. Few nations have given to another what we have given to South Vietnam. With all we have done—and with all the efforts of our brave soldiers—with all this, surely it is clear that a government with any desire or ability to meet the needs of its own people would have triumphed long ago.

We have done for them all that one nation can do for another; indeed we have tried to do more. But the outcome of that struggle depends today, as it has always depended, on the will and conviction of the people of the South.

If we follow the steps I have outlined today, I believe we can put this war behind us—and reach out once again for the country we know we should be.

For if we are distracted by war, divided by race, deflected from our proper course, we will remain a people of great and enduring promise: as Lincoln once said, "the last, best hope of mankind." That hope is in every one of us.

Robert Kennedy Campaign

If there was one great meaning to Robert Kennedy's campaign, one ideal that fired the conscience of this nation in 1968, it was that voting every four years was not enough to make a citizen—and not enough to satisfy a man. Rather each of us must take a direct and personal part in solving the great problems of this country. Each of us must do his individual part to end the suffering, feed the hungry, heal the sick, and strengthen and renew the national spirit.

It is that profound, personal, moral commitment that we seek to reaffirm today. It is a commitment to passion and action, in the service of our fellow man and the nation we love; to the simplest and most evident of laws: the Golden Rule, reminding ourselves every day that but for the grace of God, it would be our own children, starting out of our television screens with the gaunt faces of starvation, the permanent pain of injustice.

So let us resolve that all the sacrifices—from our earliest forebears, to the young man in the jungles of Vietnam, to the Presidential candidate who also gave his life—let us take from the meaning of their lives a new courage, a new conviction, a new resolve that all this shall not have been in vain, and that in our firm and unswerving determination we can yet serve the end that he so tenderly sought for us all—"to tame the savageness of man, and make gentle the life of the world."